

JAMESVILLE-DEWITT CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

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DR. PETER C. SMITH
SUPERINTENDENT

June 29, 2020

Dear Jamesville-DeWitt families,

Articulated in the District Strategic Plan is the goal that, *the Jamesville-DeWitt School District stands united in support of all students, families, and staff members. We are committed to providing a safe, caring, inclusive, equitable, and challenging learning environment that is free from discrimination and harassment, and to building a community that recognizes diversity as one of our greatest strengths. We fully embrace our rich, diverse community as expressed through race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, ability, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, religion, natural origin, immigration status, language background, language proficiency, and family structure. We will continuously search for new ways to improve the enriched learning environment at our schools, eliminate racism, eradicate disproportionality, and build equity for all students.* To accomplish this goal we intend to provide and support professional learning to assist staff as they continually develop their understanding of and practices in inclusiveness and cultural responsiveness. Jamesville-DeWitt Schools entered into a partnership with the Metro Center for Research on Equity and the Transformation of Schools to provide this professional learning.

As part of this work, we are looking for staff to serve as *Lead Learners*. Lead learners would include individuals who: 1) are able to move/lead others in their respective schools; 2) are open; 3) recognize the urgency of the work; 4) connect and are responsive to historically marginalized students and families; 5) view learning as an ongoing process; 6) naturally collaborative to create a culture of growth and collaboration; and 7) model centering students and student learning.

Lead learners will be expected to:

- embrace a model of awareness and understanding that will lead to a practice and sustained behavior to shift deficit thinking, specifically focusing on how race, identity, power, and privilege create education barriers that have created educational inequities for marginalized students and families and,
- work with colleagues to help create affirming and validating environments that mitigate vulnerability

I have asked staff to identify if they are interested in being trained as a Lead Learner and now I am reaching out and asking you to nominate a staff member, as well. If you think a particular staff member is uniquely qualified to serve as a Lead Learner, please let me know by sending an email to psmith@jd.cnyric.org by Monday, July 6. Please include a sentence or two explaining why you think this person would be a good fit. We are looking for approximately 30 staff, 10 at each level, to immediately engage in this work. Subsequent groups of Lead Learners will be trained in the future.

Please contact me if you have questions.

Sincerely,



Peter C. Smith